



MEMORANDUM
OFFICE OF THE MAYOR

DATE: January 30, 2006

TO: Commissioner Rebeca Sosa
District 6

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Carlos Alvarez", is written over the "FROM:" line.

FROM: Carlos Alvarez, Mayor
Miami-Dade County

SUBJECT: Procurement Reform – Follow up to memorandum dated 7/14/05

I will be carefully reviewing the package of procurement reforms that is expected to be presented to the Board of County Commissioners as early as March 2006. I commend the Board, under your leadership, for working with staff and continuing to enact reforms that will increase the integrity of the procurement process and make it more attractive to do business with Miami-Dade County government.

A truly comprehensive review of legislative requirements and administrative processes must incorporate input from both the private and public sectors, in conjunction with the expertise of our in-house professional staff. I am confident that the recently-created Procurement Reform Advisory Board will provide constructive recommendations on streamlining and improving the procurement process. In my memorandum to you dated July 14, 2005 (attached), I also briefly outlined a number of proposals for procurement reform. I anticipate that a number of these will be addressed in the forthcoming procurement reform package.

Just as I advocated for changes to the building permitting process, I am committed to advancing procurement reform. I look forward to working with you and the Board for continuous improvement in our government operations.

Attachment

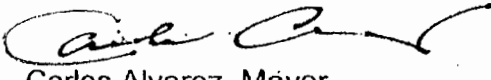
c: Honorable Chairman Joe A. Martinez and Members,
Board of County Commissioners
Honorable Harvey Ruvin, Clerk of Courts
George Burgess, County Manager
Murray A. Greenberg, County Attorney
Kay Sullivan, Director, Clerk of the Board



MEMORANDUM
OFFICE OF THE MAYOR

DATE: July 14, 2005

TO: Commissioner Rebeca Sosa
District 6

FROM: 
Carlos Alvarez, Mayor
Miami-Dade County

SUBJECT: Procurement Reform

Your leadership in advancing a wide range of reforms has significantly improved this government's procurement process. The legislative changes adopted by the Board of County Commissioners (Board) have reduced cycle time, increased competition, and streamlined procedures, enabling the County to make better purchasing decisions. As with most technical processes, however, there are many opportunities for further and continuous improvement.

In response to your memorandum dated June 21, 2005, asking for my input on additional ways to bring more accountability and streamline the procurement process, the following are some of my proposals:

- (1) Empower professional staff to make contract award decisions: The Board should be involved and make recommendations, but department directors – who have specialized knowledge in their areas – should make final award determinations. A pilot program that incorporates an increased delegated authority level, with full reporting guidelines to maintain transparency, should be considered.
- (2) No Committee review of procurement items and fast-track approval before the full Board: This would prevent delays from the Committee process and reduce cycle time, while allowing review by the full Board.
- (3) Enact stronger contractor responsibility and debarment legislation: We need clearer guidelines for determining whether or not the County should do business with any particular firm. Firms that do not meet the highest ethical standards should not benefit from public dollars. In addition, staff needs to keep us better informed of any issues of interest regarding firms currently doing business with the County.
- (4) Increase assistance to small businesses: In particular, the revamping of the Department of Business Development's "Business Compliance" procedures is needed. Small businesses should not be excluded from getting County contracts due to minor omissions, such as submitting certain incomplete forms, or lack of education regarding compliance requirements. Furthermore, the County should increase its efforts in abiding to prompt payment guidelines to ensure prime firms can pay their sub-contractors in a timely manner.

- (5) Improve contract monitoring tools: Better tracking of contracts is needed to avoid retroactive approvals and non-competitive extensions. Closely monitoring timelines can also minimize the frequency of protracted procurements and, in the process, result in cost savings.
- (6) Reduce and/or consolidate the use of Consultants: The County's extensive reliance on consultants is unnecessary, considering the existence of skilled in-house staff that can be held accountable for their actions. In particular, the concentration of consultants in our expedited construction contracts needs review. Where economically feasible, the expertise of County employees should be utilized, especially for large-scale or long-term projects.
- (7) Create a Construction Trade Advisory Panel: This can be modeled on the Development Process Advisory Committee (DPAC), in which building industry representatives are making instrumental contributions for improving the building permitting process. Similarly, a panel of contractors with current construction contracts with the County should convene and present reports to the Board with suggestions for improving the construction contracting process.
- (8) Provide incentives for expedited work: Contractors that consistently provide quality work within or earlier than specified deadlines should be rewarded for these accomplishments. I anticipate that the committee created via Resolution No. R-92-05 to study this and other issues will have practical suggestions.
- (9) Utilize Contractor/Vendor Surveys to gauge performance of County staff: In line with our "Governing for Results" framework and the Community Scorecard, contractors and vendors should be asked to provide written feedback on the quality of services from procurement staff and contact with other County staff. Regular summary reports should be provided to the Board.
- (10) Adopt standardized forms and other procurement documents among departments: There should be no instances where contracts are being approved with costly omissions, such as failure to include adequate bond requirements.

I have outlined a number of ways I believe the integrity of the procurement process and the faith of the public can be strengthened. I am certain many of these ideas have been explored to some extent previously or are currently under consideration. In fact, most have come from my own observations of the reasons for problems and delays in past contracts.

The procurement process will always have room for improvement. As such, we cannot hesitate to embrace any organizational or procedural changes that can enhance our ability to safeguard taxpayer dollars. I look forward to working with you and the rest of the Board for future reforms in County government.

c: Honorable Chairperson Joe A. Martinez and Members
Board of County Commissioners
Honorable Harvey Ruvin, Clerk of Courts
George Burgess, County Manager
Murray Greenberg, County Attorney
Kay Sullivan, Director, Clerk of the Board